THE ROMANCE OF DU BARRY

An Historical Novel Descriptive of a Most Fascinating Period and Personality in French History

BY

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Creator of the character La Du Barry
In David Belasco's play, "Du Barry."

MADAME LA GARDE.

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

In the first chapters, published on Sunday, November 9, is narrated the baptism and early childhood life of the future Madame du Barry in the French garrison town of Vaucouleurs. In the tale of the Maid of Orleans, who was born and raised in the same vicinity, is foreshadowed the strange destiny of the heroine. At the age of six she meets Louis XV, who visits Vaucouleurs on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Joan of Arc, and acts as his guide. Upon leaving Vaucouleurs the girl is installed in the Parisian Convent of Sainte Aure, where she remains seven years.

On Sunday, November 16, is narrated the historical meeting between Jeanette and the fortune teller, who predicts her future elvation. This oracle she forgets in an amusing experience with a hair-dresser named Lametz. She returns home one afternoon and informs he mother that she has engaged herself as an assistant to Monsieur Labille in his milliner shop in the Rue Saint Honore.

With Duval she has her first love affair, which is almost idyllic, and which gives a glimpse of the true character of the girl. It ends with a letter which she writes Duval from the Chateau de Cour-Neuve, where she has become a companion to Mme. La Garde. Two sons of this woman fall in love with Jeannette with disastrous consequences.

CHAPTER XII—Continued.

"Yes, monsieur. And you are a nice one to keep me waiting so long," responded Jeanette, whereupon Monsieur Nicholas pushed open the door and entered the room.

"Ma foi! My dear Jeanette, you might have kept the candle burning."

But Mademoiselle Jeanette, all her recent fears dissipated by this time, was either unwilling or unable to answer. Monsieur Nicholas had seized and was passionately kissing a hand the farmer general extended in blindly groping his way toward the door.

"At last!" cried Monsieur Nicholas, taking his brother in his arms. But his joyous exclamation died upon his lips.

"Who the devil are you, sir?" he demanded, furiously.

"Me, sir? Whom do you suppose I am, sir?" responded the farmer general with equal wrath upon being thus discovered.

"My brother, as I live!" gasped Monsieur Nicholas, incredulously. Then his voice quickly assumed an angry tone as he continued:

"Monsieur, what does this mean?"

"What, sir, should it mean except that you have arrived too late?"

"Ha! You! You!—— Now I see through it all. You have planned to play me this trick. It was you who were walking in the grove, you! Of course, you must have played the eavesdropper and heard us talking! But every dog has his day, and mine is coming."

Monsieur Nicholas by this time had succeeded in lighting the candle and had his back turned toward his brother. Now in response to an exclamation from the farmer general he wheeled and demanded:

"What did you say?"

"Where—where has she gone?"

"She? Where? Who?"

"She! Where! Whom do you suppose? Mademoiselle Jeanette, of course."

"Mademoiselle Jeanette, indeed! She has never been in here."

"But you—surely you, yourself—heard her speak!"

"Yes, I heard you trying to mimic her. I must say you did it well, sir."

"Me a mimic? Are you mad?"

"Mad enough."

This colloquy was bidding fair to pass from the retort courteous into the lie direct, when Jeanette appeared in the doorway. She had taken advantage of the bewilderment of the rival La Gardes to escape from the room under the cover of darkness, and was now returning at an opportune moment to witness the sequel of the episode.

However, before the explanatory moment arrived, several of the guests, who had been attracted by the sound of angry voices in dispute, came hurrying down the gallery. They arrived in time to witness the Messieurs La Garde disappearing arm in arm. This may have been occasioned by the sudden and formidable appearance of Madame La Garde at that moment among her assembled guests in the gallery. Perhaps she was not held in wholesome awe for nothing, and perhaps, too, it was her powerful presence that prompted others to recognize the sublime valor which is in discretion!

CHAPTER XIII.

Chance and the Stranger.

Perhaps to chance more than to anything else must be given the credit for bringing the diverting episode in the north gallery of the Chateau de Cour-Neuve to such a happy conclusion for Jeanette.

But was it chance, or was it destiny, that called the Farmer General to Paris early the following morning and kept him away from Cour-Neuve until his anger and humiliation were tempered even as the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb?

Once in Paris the farmer general was besieged with duties arising from a difficulty the government was experiencing in collecting the new agrarian tax that had been levied upon the already impoverished farmers in the provinces. Monsieur La Garde soon found it incumbent upon him to travel over certain frontier provinces; where a serious uprising was threatened as a result of the drastic measures the government was taking to enforce the collection.

With such important duties claiming his immediate attention, several months went by before either Monsieur Nicholas or the Chateau de Cour-Neuve again saw this somewhat discomfited Romeo.

When he did return to Cour-Neuve, the hospitable abode of Madame La Garde was no longer the residence of Mademoiselle Vaubernier. She had by that time passed quite beyond the reach and influence of either the farmer general or the master of requests. But this is galloping over bridges before they are in sight.

Returning then to a day or so following the comedy of errors in the small salon where the rival La Gardes had presumed to rush in where a monarch might—and afterward did—fear to tread: Jeanette was advising with Madame La Garde as to the propriety of a new gown which had just arrived from Labille's, and which madame intended to wear at a function, the same evening—a function given by the Marquis du Quesnoy in the Rue de Bourbon. Monsieur Nicholas was precluded from going by a sudden and vehement attack of the gout.

This Marquise du Quesnoy, of whom the reader has had a glimpse in the Labille milliner shop when she occasioned so many qualms among the demoiselles de modes—was famous for her lavish entertainments which once a week transformed her splendid house in the fashionable Rue de Bourbon into a scene of social brilliancy only to be compared with the royal levees at Versailles and Trianon.

An invitation to an evening in the Rue de Bourbon was a prize to be coveted, and was often mentioned by the recipients upon seasonable occasions to their own vainglory. For such an invitation argued some social eminence on the part of the person invited and was only procurable by members of the nobility or others who had a fair measure of wit, wealth, or beauty to recommend them.

Here was to be witnessed the imposing pageantry of eighteenth century life passing in weekly review—the pageantry of an age when appearances were everything or nothing. Genuises of the brush and pen rubbed elbows with nobles of the realm. Ministers and professional courtiers traded in flattery. Reigning beauties exhibited their wares in tempting array before the eyes of possible purchasers. Fashion pawned the buckles on its shoes and philosophy fell to dueling for a favor. Vice gambled with virtue. It was a gilded period—a gorgeous facade to the House of Life.

Perhaps virtue was a trifle out of fashion, except when concealed from the general eye, or when scrpulously veneered with a semblance of its opposite. Hardly ever was virtue counted among the valuable assets of the social aspirant of either sex. Possibly its possessor was an accused person were he or she once detected and arraigned before the tribunal of court opinion. But it was seldom necessary to resort to such extreme measures to discover its absence.

So it is to the Rue de Bourbon that Madame La Garde is going this evening, to contribute herself and her companion—for Mademoiselle Jeanette Vaubernier is to accompany her—to the gayety of the capital. She is going to pass under a battery of eyes that will be quick to notice and take advantage of a vulnerable point in a gown as proclaiming the wearer for better or for worse. Hence the importance of consulting with Jeanette—for Jeanette had been a milliner.

Time passed quickly enough for the couple—discussing momentous millinery trifles and trying on this and that gown until evening approached and the family equipage was announced. Jeanette was arrayed much in the same modest manner as on the evening when she awoke so much admiration in the little Cour-Neuve theater. Only now she was wearing a rather curious pin in the butterfly lace shawl that was drawn loosely about her shoulders—an emblem depicting in miniature the royal coat of arms.

This pin caught the sharp eye of Madame La Garde just as they were passing from the main salon into the vestibule, where the carriage was awaiting them. Did Jeanette know that it was a serious breach of etiquette for anyone in France to wear the royal coat of arms, except by express permission from his majesty? Louis XV was very chary in granting such favors, and the wearing of royal armorial bearings in jewelry was considered an especial privilege. This knowledge was doubtless at the bottom of the sudden expression of surprise to which Madame La Garde gave vent upon beholding the pin Jeanette was flaunting so conspicuously. Whereupon, as the equipage, which was drawn by two splendid horses, driven by a coachman in the Cour-Neuve livery, himself yearning for the city and doubtless a certain tavern just off the Rue de Bourbon— sped onward toward Paris, Jeanette related to her astonished mistress how she had come into possession of the emblem.

Before she was done with her narrative, which was interrupted at frequent intervals by incredulous expressions from Madame La Garde, the carriage and its occupants had gained the immediate suburbs of the city. Whether the coachman was so eager to leave the occupants of the carriage at their destination and be off to join his boon companions, or whether he was unable to check the speed of the powerful animals, as the carriage turned a sudden corner the horses reared on their haunches and almost fell backward. Before the coachman was aware of it an agile figure leapt out of the shadow, and grasping one of the plunging animals by the bit, swerved him aside by sheer force of muscular power. Was the man a giant in disguise or an apparition? The coachman saw him stoop quickly and pick up a small child, who had stumbled and fallen directly in front of the horses.

Having thus plucked the child as lightly as a feather from under the heels of the still rearing and plunging animals, the stranger deposited his human urden in a place of safety and now approached the carriage. He was prompted to do this by seeing the anxious and inquiring faces of the two women through the open window. It was just at this moment—he had taken off his hat upon coming near the carriage and was preparing to explain the narrow escape of the child—that the moon came out from behind a cloud and revealed his face.

Mme. Le Garde and Jeanette saw a remarkable face—pale with the unnatural pallor usually associated with protracted study and indoor life. But the face belied the powerful physique of the stranger, who had picked up the child with one hand and, with no more apparent effort than a duelist wielding a rapier, had thrown one of the plunging horses off his feet with the other.

But it was his strangely piercing eyes that at once attracted and fascinated both the women—eyes that seemed to color with the varying thought of their owner. They would glow one moment until they gave one the impression of a jungle animal at bay and the next moment were entirely devoid of lustre. Jeanette was particularly affected, as the stranger now rested them upon her with a searching and yet furtive persistence. Where had she seen the man before? Could she be mistaken in the familiar features and bearing of the stranger thus suddenly accosted? She was vaguely conscious of a note being struck upon her heart strings—a note that had been struck by someone somewhere before. All this flashed through her mind with telepathic instancy. She was recalled to herself by the man, with an air of apology, saying:

"There is no harm done. It was only a child who stumbled and fell in the road. So Madame and Mademoiselle need not be at all alarmed."

"But are you not hurt yourself, monsieur?" inquired Jeanette.

"No. But it is kind of mademoiselle to ask—very kind."

Something in the vibrant resonance of the voice carried Jeanette back to the forest of Fontainebleau—to the scene of her remarkable adventure with the young man whom she had thought mad at the time. Surely she was not mistaken in the eyes, and particularly in the voice that was addressing her.

Madame La Garde broke this transient reverie by saying:

"Only for your presence of mind and promptness, Monsieur, we might have had a distressing accident. If Monsieur will call at the Chateau de Cour-Neuve tomorrow, he may expect a suitable reward." Perhaps it was the slightly patronizing tone in which this was said that prompted a response in which amusement and a shade of reproach were mingled:

"One deserves no reward for saving a life, Madame. But Mademoiselle has already promised me one reward."

"Surely you are mistaken!" Jeanette managed to ejaculate.

"Mademoselle Vaubernier does not remember our meeting at Fontainebleau?"

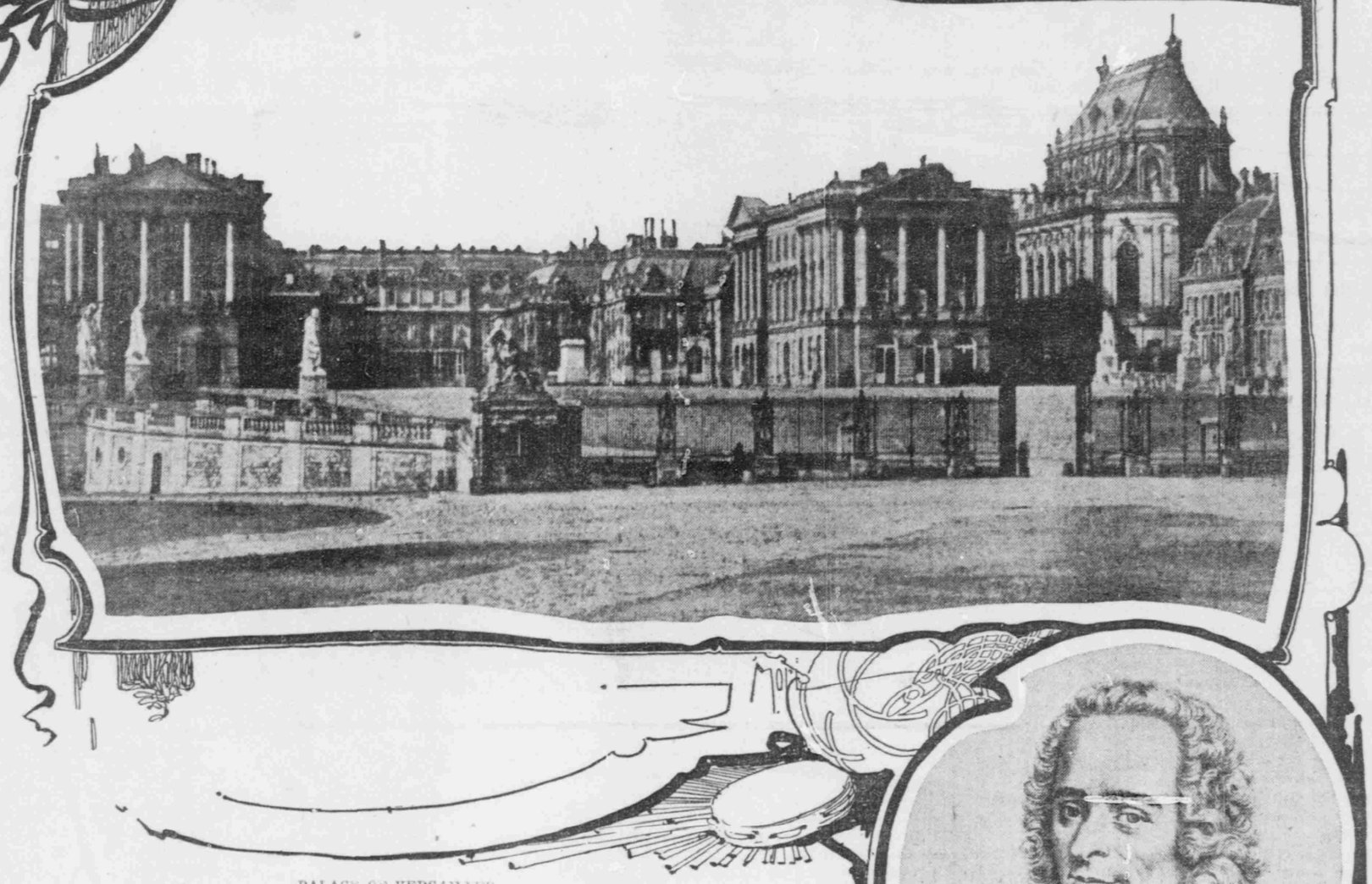
"Yes—yes. I remember now the queer fortune that was told me there."

"My reward—I will come for it at Versailles."

"Versailles? What! Jeanette, the fellow is either a fool or"—Madame La Garde continued, sinking her voice into a whisper—"a sorcerer. What does he mean?"

Before Jeanette could frame a reply the spirited horses, growing more restless and unmanageable as the delay was prolonged, started off, leaving the mysterious stranger alone in the road. When Jeanette looked back soon afterward the man had disappeared as though he had been swallowed up by the darkness—for the moon had hidden her face behind a cloud.

(To Be Continued Next Sunday.)



PALACE OF VERSAILLES.

VOLTAIRE.

ODD CHANCES TAKEN BY ESCAPING CONVICTS.

CLIMBING sixty feet up a perpendicular wall by the aid of a water pipe is a feat which strongly reminds one of the redoubtable Jean Valjean, of Victor Hugo's story. The prisoner who not long ago performed this gymnastic exploit at Pentonville, England, seems to have had no idea of escape. Indeed, he was to be discharged next day. He merely wished to do what no one else had done—spend a day and a night on the roof of the prison.—He got his desire, and was nearly frozen into the bargain, for the night turned out a very cold one, with a sharp frost before morning.

Boring Through a Wall.

Iquique, a city of South America, is subjected to frequent earthquakes, so the buildings are mostly one-storied, of adobe, or sundried clay. The prison is no exception to the rule, but the walls are enormously thick, and without the aid of some metal tool, quite impossible to pierce. There was, therefore, amazement among the officials when a noted desperado named Castro was found one morning to have vanished.

A large hole gaped in the wall of his cell. It was discovered that the man had saved his drinking water, three pints a day, and used it to moisten a spot in the wall. Then, with the aid of a splinter of wood, he had worked a hole in the softened clay. Continuing to pour water into this hole, he eventually rendered a large piece of the wall rotten enough to break away.

He Wore Nature's Green.

Michael Flaherty, a convict in the Bench City prison in California, had a fifteen-years' term to serve, but behaved so well that he was accorded more liberty than some of the prisoners, and was set to work in the garden. But even there the watchful ring of sentries seemed to preclude all change of escape. It occurred to him that if he could only color himself to match the long grass of a hayfield which bordered the grounds he might succeed in escaping.

Somewhat similar was the performance of an Italian prisoner at Turin. He was a long sentence man, but his conduct had been so good that he was permitted the privilege of doing work about the prison. He was a clever painter and was employed in painting the governor's house.

Working one day on the roof, he used his paint brush to such good purpose that he turned his convict garb into a suit of blue overalls. Then he seized his chance and slipping through a trapdoor into a garret, marched boldly down the stairs and out of the front door. Luckily for his warder, who had been chatting with one of the maids, and so neglecting his duty, the man could not resist the temptation of entering a neighboring wine shop and was there recognized and recaptured.

WHY BOYS LEAVE THE FARMS FOR CITIES.

WHEN one considers the congested state of the great cities, and the many miserable, unventilated places within their environs called home, and then remembers the wide rolling miles of God's green earth yet uncultivated or neglected for want of willing hands, one ponders on the fact that so many boys—yes, and girls, too—leave the farm home as soon as they arrive at maturity.

A farm home without shade and fruit in plenty is, indeed, a desolate place to live, and a writer in the "Farmers' Sentinel" avers that it is the cause in most cases of the boys and girls leaving the farm when they grow up.

There is no more enjoyable place to live than in a comfortable farm home snugly surrounded by beautiful shade and fruit trees. In such a home the farmer always has a happy family. The women folk, with their pretty flower beds and settees in the shade of some stately trees, are contented. The boys and girls grow up liking the farm, and have no desire to leave such a home.

The cost for trees, plants, and grass seed is comparatively nothing, while the benefits and pleasure derived is inestimable. Again, no matter how small and uninviting a farmhouse may look in a treeless yard, if the same house is surrounded by a little lawn, a few ornamental and fruit trees, the place looks cozy and comfortable. And just a little grass and trees make the change.

A farm without fruit and fruit trees is certainly not an attractive place. In fact, no farmer ought to think of living on such a place, let alone bringing up children in such a barren spot. There is nothing that will make farm life so contented as a liberal supply of fruit raised on the place.

With apples to eat, apples for cooking, for preserves, jelly and cider; with pears, plums, and cherries to eat while ripe and fresh and in the preserved state, and with an abundant supply of strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries, and currants, living on the farm is a hundred times more pleasant and satisfactory. The whole family is contented; the children grow up healthy and strong, with plenty of fruit, and there is no longing desire on the part of them to forsake such a bountiful farm home.